

Message Text

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EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS TO SECDEF

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PFOR, SW, DEF, NO, IC, NATO

SUBJ: TALK WITH SUPREME COMMANDER SWEDISH ARMED FORCES

1. SUMMARY: GENERAL STIG SYNNERGREN CALLED ON ME AT HIS INITIATIVE JUNE 30 TO CONVEY TO ME HIS THOUGHTS ON THE DEFENSE OF SWEDEN, THE SOVIET THREAT TO NATO'S NORTHERN FLANK, AND THE IMPORTANCE IN THIS CONNECTION OF US-SWEDISH MILITARY EXCHANGES. HE EXPRESSED PARTICULAR CONCERN AT THE CONTINUING BUILD-UP OF SOVIET SUBMARINE AND AIR POWER IN THE KOLA PENINSULA/NORWEGIAN SEA AREA. SYNNERGREN SHOWED HIMSELF WELL-INFORMED ON NATO AFFAIRS. HE SAID HE WAS DISTURBED TO SEE EVIDENCE OF A POSSIBLE WEAKENING OF THE DEFENSE EFFORTS OF SMALLER EUROPEAN MEMBERS OF NATO. HE LINKED SWEDISH EFFORTS TO MARKET THE VIGGEN WITH THE NEED FOR OUTSIDE HELP IN FINANCING DEVELOPMENT OF A FOLLOW-ON AIRCRAFT "FOR THE 1980S". SYNNERGREN SAID THE GOS HAD ASKED HIM SOME TIME AGO TO DO HIS BEST TO ASSURE THAT U.S.-SWEDISH MILITARY RELATIONS REMAIN CLOSE AND FRIENDLY, WHATEVER THE UPS AND DOWNS AT POLITICAL LEVELS. HE SAID THE GOS CURRENTLY IS RECEPTIVE TO HIGH-LEVEL VISITS BY U.S. MILITARY CHIEFS, SPECIFICALLY

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THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF. END SUMMARY

2. US-SWEDISH MILITARY EXCHANGES. AT THE BEGINNING AND END OF HIS COVERSATION WITH ME IN MY OFFICE JUNE 30, GENERAL SYNNERGREN (SUPREME COMMANDER SWEDISH ARMED FORCES) STRESSED HIS SATISFACTION, SHARED, HE SAID, BY HIS POLITICAL SUPERIORS, THAT SWEDISH-U.S. MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS CONTINUED TO BE CLOSE DURING THE DIFFICULT PERIOD WITHOUT AMBASSADORS. HE PAID TRIBUTE TO THE ROLE OF OUR DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE DURING THIS PERIOD. HE NOW LOOKS FOR CONTINUING CONTACT WITH ME AND NEW EXCHANGES. THE GOS IS RECEPTIVE TO AND, INDEED, DESIROUS OF A VISIT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS. SYNNERGREN SEES CONTINUED EXCHANGES (TECHNICAL AND PERSONAL) WITH THE U.S. AS MUTUALLY ADVANTAGEOUS TO BOTH SWEDEN AND THE U.S. SWEDEN APPRECIATES TECHNICAL HELP RECEIVED FROM U.S. INDUSTRY, WHICH ALSO YIELDS RECIPROCAL ADVANTAGES TO SWEDEN'S CAPACITY TO UTILIZE AND IMPROVE ON IMPORTED TECHNOLOGY QUALIFIES HER AS "THE JAPAN OF EUROPE".

3. SWEDISH PREPAREDNESS. SYNNERGREN TOLD ME HE SEES SWEDEN'S DEFENSE CAPABILITY AS DEPENDENT ESSENTIALLY ON THE INDIVIDUAL ATTITUDES OF ITS CITIZENRY. SWEDES ARE EXTREMELY NATIONALISTIC, IN HIS VIEW. THIS NATIONALISM INHIBITS THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUPPORT FOR SWEDISH PARTICIPATION IN MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS, WHETHER NATO OR WARSAW PACK, COMECON OR THE EEC. TO HIS SATISFACTION, THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO RESISTANCE TO MILITARY SERVICE ON THE PART OF SWEDISH YOUTH. SWEDISH DEFENSES, SO SYNNERGREN ASSERTED, ARE STRONG AND SWEDES HAVE THE WILL TO DEFEND SWEDISH SOIL. (COMMENT: THE SWEDES WILL SERVE, BUT WILL THEY FIGHT?) LATER, SYNNEGREN INDICATED THAT THE SWEDISH WILLINGNESS TO SHOULDER THE HIGH COSTS OF DEFENSE COULD BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY SLACKENING ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE.

4. SOVIET SUPERIORITY TO NATO OFF NORTHERN NORWAY. GENERAL SYNNERGREN EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT INCREASED DEPLOYMENT OF SOVIET NAVAL AIR POWER OFF NORTHERN NORWAY. HE SAID THE GOS CREDITED THE USSR WITH AT LEAST 160 SUBMARINES IN THE KILA PENINSULA BASE AREA. MOST OF THESE, WHETHER DIESEL OR NUCLEAR, ARE DESIGNED FOR ATTACHESON SHIPPING. HE THINKS SOVIET SUBMARINES AND LONG-RANGE AIRCRAFT COULD MAKE THE NORWEGIAN SEA FROM THE SHETLANDS PAST ICELAND TO THE BARENTS SEA IMPOSSIBLE FOR U.S. CARRIER OPERATIONS.

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5. CONCERN OVER WEAKENING OF NATO DEFENSE EFFORTS. SYNNERGREN SAID THAT FROM WHAT HE HEARS ABOUT AN APPARENT WILLINGNESS IN THE NETHERLANDS TO WEAKEN ITS DEFENSE EFFORT, SWEDEN HAS REASON TO BE CONCERNED THAT SUCH A TREND ALSO COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE WILLINGNESS OF THE SWEDISH POPULATION TO CONTINUE TO SHOULDER THEIR HIGH DEFENSE BURDEN.

6. SWEDISH NEUTRALITY. I ASKED SYNNERGREN ABOUT HYPOTHETICAL SWEDISH REACTIONS TO SOVIET ATTACKS ON NORWAY AND FINLAND. THE TENOR OF HIS REPLY MANAGED TO CONVEY A CERTAIN DEGREE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO CASES. HE MADE PLAIN THAT SWEDEN WOULD REMAIN FIRMLY NEUTRAL IN THE EVENT OF A SOVIET ATTACK ON NORWAY. HE SUGGESTED THE SOVIETS WOULD STRIKE AT NARVIK WITHOUT PASSING THROUGH SWEDISH TERRITORY. THE GOS CONTINUES TO VIEW A SOVIET AGGRESSION IN SCANDINAVIA AS AN UNLIKELY CONTINGENCY. IN THE EVENT OF A SOVIET ATTACK ON FINLAND, SWEDEN WOULD ALSO REMAIN NEUTRAL; BUT THE FOUNDATIONS OF SWEDEN'S POLICY OF NEUTRALITY WOULD COME INTO QUESTION.

7. VIGGEN SALES. SYNNERGREN SAID SWEDEN SEEKS TO ENGAGE BELGIAN, DUTCH, NORWEGIAN, DANISH OR OTHER EUROPEAN PROSPECTIVE PARTNERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOLLOW-ON TO THE VIGGEN AJ-37, WITH PRODUCTION IN THOSE COUNTRIES AS WELL AS IN SWEDEN. THE CURRENT SALES EFFORT AIMS AT EARNING MONEY TO HELP FINANCE THE FOLLOW-ON TO THE VIGGEN "FOR THE 1980S". THE DESIGN OF THIS FOLLOW-ON, IN WHICH OTHER COUNTRIES COULD PARTICIPATE, WOULD BE BASED ESSENTIALLY ON THE CURRENT VIGGEN. THE IDEA OF NATIONAL PRODUCTION IN NATO COUNTRIES IS PARTLY INTENDED TO ALLAY FEARS ARISING FROM THE SWEDISH POLICY OF NEUTRALITY. SYNNERGREN OBSERVED THAT SWEDEN HAS GUARANTEED PARTS DELIVERIES TO DENMARK FOR THE DRAKKEN AIRCRAFT, EVEN IN TIME OF WAR.

8. NORWEGIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS AND THE SVALBARD TREATY. SYNNERGREN COMMENTED THAT CURRENT NORWEGIAN DIFFICULTIES WITH THE USSR OVER SVALBARD (SPITSBERGEN) ARE, IN PART, DUE TO INCAUTION DISPLAYED BY THE NORWEGIANS IN THE 1945-48 PERIOD, WHEN THEY PROPOSED BILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS THAT WOULD HAVE GIVEN THE SOVIETS SPECIAL STATUS AND UNDERCUT THE MULTINATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE 1920 TREATY. THE NORWEGIANS ARE LEERY OF INVITING U.S. OIL COMPANIES TO HELP THEM IN EXPLOITING THE NORTHERN OIL
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RESERVES. UNFORTUNATELY THE ONLY OTHER PRACTICAL SOURCE OF EXPERTISE, FRANCE, ALSO AROUSES MISGIVINGS.

9. ICELAND. SYNNERGREN SAID THAT THE GOS HAS RECENTLY SOUGHT TO EXERT AN INFLUENCE IN ICELAND THAT WOULD FAVOR CONTINUING RETENTION OF THE U.S. BASE AT KEFLAVIK. TALKING ABOUT STRONG SOVIET EFFORTS TO INFLUENCE THE SITUATION IN ICELAND, HE SAID THAT THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR'S WIFE WAS THE DAUGHTER OF MARSHAL GRETCHKO.

10. COMMENT: IT WAS OBVIOUS TO ME FROM SEVERAL OF GENERAL SYNNERGREN'S OBSERVATIONS THAT SWEDEN HAS SOME DEGREE OF ACCESS TO NATO INFORMATION THROUGH NORDIC CHANNELS.
STRAUSZ-HUPE

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECDEF.

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